

Spotlight on Tucson Unified School District's Mexican-American/La Raza Studies

"Call to the Audience" Speakers

May 10, 2011 • TUSD Governing Board Meeting

Audio link: <http://quill.tusd.k12.az.us/20111005>

TUSD Governing Board meeting audio of recordings page:

<http://tusd1.org/contents/govboard/gbmeetings.html>

Added notes are designated with brackets [].

1:13:07-1:16:12 -- John Munger

Dr. Stegeman, Members of the Board, Dr. Pedicone:
I'm John Munger. I'm a longtime member of the Tucson community. I've lived here 46 years. I live in TUSD. I've educated four of my children at least all or in part in TUSD. And I'm a former member of the Arizona Board of Regents. . . which runs the university system. I've been interested in education for many, many years.

When the ethnic studies program questions arose this last fall, I became interested and I became very concerned that there is a lot of discussion occurring on both sides from people who hadn't read the materials.

There was a lot of discussion from people who had one point of view or another and I set upon to first do a FOIA request for the books and I read the books. And I came to inform you briefly in the three minutes I have, what my position is, having read the books.

I learned several things. First of all, TUSD didn't want to give me the books. I had to do a FOIA request. When they did provide me the books, it was after five months. And they ended up not providing me all the books. Because I found other people – there were a few other people who got books – and they didn't get the same ones I got. When I did get the books I found some very concerning things. And this is what the books say.

The books are not about history. The books are not about ethnicity. The books teach two major themes. The two themes they teach is: first, the books are classical showpieces of Marxist oriented indoctrination. They are about political oppression, incessant deprecation of anything not Chicano – including the U.S. Constitution, capitalism, and anything European or of European culture. That's what the books say.

Second of all, they teach students that they are oppressed; that they are principally not American, but that they are Chicano; should not join in on American society, but should separate themselves ultimately in an area called Aztlan which is an area of the U.S. that now makes up California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas – which has been stolen . . . by the Europeans.

The books constantly talk about the U.S. Constitution as slightly better than the Royal Charters of England but still made up by slave owners and evildoers. It talks about protests beyond the law is okay, including the word 'sabotage'. That is wrong. These books are not about history. These books do not present alternative points of view. [speaker's time is up]

1:19:50-1:22:12 Speaker: Lisa

Good evening honorable board members. I come to you tonight as someone who has taught in TUSD. I also spent three years teaching at a charter school here in Tucson on the south side. And prior to that I was a Chicago public school teacher. And I come to you tonight to express my concerns about the ethnic studies program.

It would never dawn on me to walk into a classroom and look at my students, and based on their skin color make any sort of pre-judgments. They are my students and I am there to teach. And I take that position very seriously.

I have a great deal of influence as a teacher when I am imparting knowledge. And also it's my goal to inspire them as well, but it would never dawn on me to use that as a platform of indoctrination which is clearly evident. And I support whole-heartedly what John Munger just expressed.

I would also like to say: that Dr. King said well over four decades ago, "That a man is to be judged on the content of his character, not by the color of his skin." Why in the world would we entertain a subject matter that reverts back into a place and time that discourages us to look at what we have moved beyond from.

I encourage the board and everyone here tonight – regardless of what position you take on HB2281 – the fact is yes it evokes a lot of strong emotion – I think that is one area we can all agree on. But I would also like us to look at this beyond emotion and look at this as the importance of the future of the children who are in our classroom.

In many cases, and from my observation of the ethnic studies program – and yes, I have read the materials, and yes I have conducted research. And I am also proud to say I have been getting the word out. And I will continue the fight because I do not want to see the call for revolution spread to other schools and other districts in other parts of the country.

The Tucson model has become militant. And quite frankly, quite frankly, should it persist, as a teacher I will not comply! Thank you.

1:22:00 -- Juan White (gives his time to Laura)

1:22:12 -- Laura

Hi, I'm Laura . . . A few months ago I was sitting at a bus stop across from Tucson High. A young girl was sitting next to me reading a book. We started talking. She told me she was studying Mexican-American Studies.

[Speaker is interrupted:]

Board member Adelita Grijalva: Dr. Stegeman, I think the whole point of allowing new speakers was to hear from other speakers, and we have heard from this speaker, and you have picked. . .

Laura: I have not spoken here for months.

Board President Stegeman: Ms. Grijalva. . .

Board member Adelita Grijalva: If I leave then we can't have a meeting.

Voice from audience: Point of order!

[Board member Adelita Grijalva walks out of meeting]

Man in audience: This is a travesty right here. Travesty!

Board President Stegeman: We are now recessed until we reassemble a quorum [time stamp 1:23:43]

Board President Stegeman: I'm sorry for the interruption.

[Meeting reconvenes when Miguel Cuevas re-enters meeting]
Board President Stegeman: Back to order. I'm sorry. . . Thank you, thank you. I'm sorry about the interruption. So uh . . .
Board member Miguel Cuevas: Dr. Stegeman can I have a point of clarification even if that's technical? This is the last speaker, is that correct?
Board President Stegeman: Yeah. According to what I said before, this is the last speaker before I was going to ask the board whether they wanted the last set of cards.
Board member Miguel Cuevas: I will commit to staying out here as long as this is the last speaker.
Board President Stegeman: Yes. I will give the board the option at that point. So [speaker] please proceed.

[Note: passages read below are from *Message to Aztlan: Selected writings of Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales*, Edited by Antonio Esquibel (Arte Publico Press, Houston, TX, 2001). Bracketed page numbers are added to identify page location. Download reference: http://www.channelingreality.com/Education/Documents/Msg_to_Aztlan.pdf]

1:24:25 -- Laura

Thank you, thank you Board.

A few months ago I was sitting at a bus stop across from Tucson High. A young girl was sitting at the bus stop next to me reading a book and we started talking. She told me she was studying Mexican-American Studies. And I asked if those were the books she was using and she said "yes." She showed me some of them.

I want to know why books like this one are being taught to our kids. So I sent away to TUSD, they sent me and told me this book was being used in at least five classes, including third graders. And I have the list at home. And I'm just going to read you little segments of it. This one, it starts with "An Epic Poem"

**"I shed tears of sorrow,
I sow seeds of hate."** [p.17]

**"The force of tyranny
of men
who rule
By farce and hypocrisy"** [p.23]

**"In a country that has wiped out
all my history,
. . . stifled all my pride.**

**In a country that has placed a
different weight of indignity upon
my
age
old
burdened back,
Inferiority
is the new load . . . "** [p.23]

**"My land is lost
and stolen."** [p.25]

"My culture has been raped." [p.26]

**"Poverty and city-living under the colonial
system of the Anglo has castrated our
people's culture."** [p.32]

**"One note, especially to those young Chicanos:
hard drugs and drug culture is an invention of
the gringo because he has no culture."** [p.71]

**"We have to destroy capitalism, and we have to
help five-sixths of the world to destroy capitalism
in order to equal all people's lives."** [p.88]

**"The Declaration of Independence states that
we the people have the right to revolution, the
right to overthrow a government that has
committed abuses and seeks complete control
over the people. This is in order to clean out the
corrupted, rotten officials that develop out of
any type of capitalistic systems."**[p.85]

**"Any country based on capitalism is based
on greed."**[p.85]

At page 72 of this book it says: "radical shit". Excuse my words. Page 73: "bullshit". Page 224: "chingando". It means "fucking". This is for third graders. It's used also for third grade civil rights. Yes, I have the list, I can show you that. Okay.

**"Today I have a message for all the people of
Aztlan: to the children, the students, . . . the
workers, . . . -- the masses of our people -- and
to the bloodsuckers, the parasites, the vampires
who are the capitalists of the world: . . . "** [p.76]

**"The schools are tools of the power structure
that blind and sentence our youth to a life of
confusion and hypocrisy, one that preaches
assimilation and practices institutional racism."** [p.78]

This one is called "The Revolution":

**"The revolution stands in life's
dark shadows;
Waiting impatiently for her, his
troops."** [p.187]

**"The revolution sees Mexicans turn into gray
gringos . . . "** [p.187]

". . . brag like washed up vendidos" [p.187]

[speaker explains:] *Vendidos* means "sellouts".

[speaker continues reading quote]

"and kiss the man's ass." [p.187]

Superintendent Pedicone interrupts: I'm sorry, but Dr. Stegeman I'm going to ask that the language not be mentioned during public meetings. We may have young people in this room. It's inappropriate.

Laura: You're right, you're right.

Board President Stegeman: Thank you Dr. Pedicone., I . . .

Laura: Thank you for reminding me.

Man in audience: You're teaching it in the classroom!

Board President Stegeman: Alright, please come to order. Thank you Dr. Pedicone. I think that intervention was appropriate.

Laura: Yes. I think I've said enough.

Board President Stegeman: Yes

Laura: But this is being taught. [speaker resumes reading excerpts:]

**"You can do it, too,
become the gringo stooge."** [p.189]

[Speaker's time is up. Time stamp 1:27:41]

Transcribed by D. Niwa, May 2011

Supplement A

Passages from *Message to Aztlan* were read at the 5/10/11 TUSD Governing Board meeting. (See transcript on previous page; or hear audio: <http://quill.tusd.k12.az.us/20111005> (go to time stamp 1:22:30). The following identify TUSD use of the book:

DOCUMENT 1:

High School Course Texts and Reading Lists

Tucson Unified School District
Mexican American Studies Department
{file name: "[MASD HS Reading List.pdf](#)"}

Listed under "**Table 21. American History / Mexican American Perspectives 1, 2 – Texts and Reading Lists**" (see p.2 of file) and under "**Course: English/Latino Literature 5, 6**" (see p.5):

[Author:] Gonzales, Rodolfo "Corky"
[Year Published:] 2001
[Title:] *Message to Aztlan*: Selected Writings
[Publisher:] Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press

DOCUMENT 2, 3, 4:

07-08 Social Justice, Resistance, and Latino Literature Syllabus

{file name: "[07-09Senior Syllabus Template.docx](#)"}

Social Justice, Resistance, and Latino Literature Syllabus

{file names: "[Senior Syllabus 2009-10.docx](#)" and "[Senior Syllabus template.docx](#)"}

Listed under "Third Quarter "Resistance Through Rhetoric":
• *Message to Aztlan* by Corky Gonzales

DOCUMENT 5:

MATERIALS TO BE USED WITH GRADE 3 CIVIL RIGHTS

http://www.tusd1.org/resources/ss/documents/Gr3Civil_rghs.pdf
(TUSD website, accessed Oct. 2010)

See pg 3 for the *Message to Aztlan* listing (Note: The "civil rights" materials list covers a gamut of cultures and topics. At the bottom of pages is the TUSD logo and "African American History 09/28/07")

Additionally, *Tucson Weekly* ran an article -- "Education vs. Fear" by Mari Herreras (11/11/2010) -- that has a **comment** "Posted by **ap** on November 13, 2010 at 9:17 AM" that identifies *Message to Aztlan* as a text used under the description of "**Highlights of Social Justice, Resistance, and Latino Literature English 7/8**".
<http://www.tucsonweekly.com/tucson/education-vs-fear/Content?oid=2333270>

"On several occasions TUSD Mexican-American / La Raza Studies supporters – including current and former program participants -- spoke at TUSD Governing Board meetings and cited the United Nations and a UN declaration to validate the existence of the program! Since when did U.S. citizens approve the use of U.S. public education funds and our schools to promote the United Nations' politics and it's Marxist ways?!" -- d.n.*

* ref: TUSD Governing Board meetings on 12/14/10, 3/8/11

Supplement B

The following provides more details than what the author could give during his "call to the audience" remarks that were delivered to the TUSD Governing Board on May 10, 2011, in Tucson, Arizona.

TUSD Mexican-American Studies curriculum examined by John Munger

<http://thechollajumps.wordpress.com/2011/05/04/tusd-mexican-american-studies-curriculum-examined-by-john-munger/>

Blog post by John Munger
at imaginearizona dated Jan. 21, 2011

Five months ago I requested hard copies of the textbooks and reading lists given to students in Tucson Unified School District's "Raza Ethnic Studies" Program. (*editor's note: renamed Mexican American Studies this school year*) That program exists in three high schools in TUSD. It consists of a formal class plus an after school MEChA (Movement of Chicano Students) (*editor's note Movimiento Estudil Chicano de Aztlan*) Program sponsored largely by the same teachers who teach the class. MEChA posters fill the formal classroom; so it is clear that the programs are tied together. After two or three months of effort, I was finally told that I had to file a request under Arizona's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to receive such copies. Over two months after I had done THAT I still had not been supplied the books. It was only after I wrote threatening to file suit that the books were supplied. I have now reviewed the books and materials I was supplied.

I have learned the following:

- 1) TUSD still did not provide all the books they use, since I have been able to compare what they provided to me with materials acquired by other interested persons. They appear to supply different books and materials to different people.
- 2) What they did provide was a showpiece of classical Marxist oriented indoctrination of cultural and political oppression, incessant deprecation of anything not "Chicano," including the US Constitution, capitalism, and European culture. Students are taught that they are part of an oppressed minority of "indigenous" people (how those who are principally Mexican in background are "indigenous to the Southwestern US is not explained), whose lands (California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas) have been stolen by the Europeans and should be taken back as a separate "Chicano" nation they call "Aztlan."

They want political separation from the US based almost entirely on race and based on a Marxist economic model. Students are taught (sometimes subtly and sometimes expressly) that their "indigenous" culture has been corrupted by the predominant European culture of the US, that "Chicanos" should refuse to assimilate and instead should come together in "colonies" to exercise maximum political power until they are able to retake "Aztlan" as a separate nation— an explicitly "bronze" nation,

incidentally, based almost entirely on racial profiling.

In the meantime they should recognize that capitalism is corrupt and they should work towards complete redistribution of wealth; that everyone is entitled to a home, healthcare, reasonably equal income, etc. Presumably Aztlan would be a place where Communism would finally, and happily, flourish.

Having read the books the students must read, as well as the Principles and philosophies of MEChA, I found many interesting quotes and facts.

First, there is NO book presenting American History generally, nor even the standard view of Southwestern American History — ALL the books speak solely from the point of view of the oppressed “Chicano,” with no effort to teach alternative thought or facts.

Second, the concepts and language in the materials is, frankly, classic Marxist indoctrination based on oppression and inculcation of hatred of anyone European or who might identify themselves as an American. One of the principal textbooks, neutrally named “Occupied America,” teaches that America is nothing more than “conquerors” who have “exploited the conquered” (read “Chicanos”). Indeed, one enlightened student has been quoted as saying that, before taking the class, she “did not know” she was oppressed—but now she does. The author summarizes by saying that “The oppressors, . . . oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power,” and that “Only the power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free you.” In other words, attack the oppressors (read traditional America and Americans) where they are weak and tear them down. Sound good?

Another book, entitled “Declarations of Independence” proffers ideas about many important American concepts. Of the US Constitution, the author writes: “In fact, while the Constitution was certainly an improvement over the Royal charters of England, it was still a document drawn up by rich men, merchants, and slave owners who wanted a bit of political democracy but had no sympathy for economic democracy. It was designed to set up a “rule of law,” which would efficiently prevent rebellion by dissatisfied elements in the population (read oppressed “Chicanos.”) Later, having established that this “rule of law” is corrupt, the author then concludes: “Protest beyond the law is not a departure from democracy; it is absolutely essential to it.” In other words, armed rebellion, whether by terror or otherwise, is just fine. Indeed, he encourages “strikes, boycotts, non-cooperation, mass demonstrations and SABOTAGE.” Indeed, it is instructive that the very logo of MEChA includes a lit stick of dynamite. How warming.

The author states “If the gringo does not get out of our way, we will stampede over him.” Of course, says the author, one of the prime reasons for this oppression is that America does not have “equal income.” He expressly highlights the teachings of the “higher phase of communist society” which would solve this inequality. He adds that “we don’t have to get into complicated

arguments about exactly how all things will be distributed. It would be an enormous accomplishment to get agreement that the fundamental requirements of existence — food, housing, medical care, education, and work — be distributed according to need.” In his opinion, the “drive for profit is ruthless,” and such concepts have created “terrible human consequences.”

He states that the better alternative is the “ideal of communism — a classless society of equal abundance for all” In sum, he opines that “Only when wealth is equalized (at least roughly) will liberty be equalized.” These are just some of the facts pertaining to TUSD’s Ethnic Studies Program and MEChA. There is much, much more. These facts are based on reading the materials given our students to read.

The results of this indoctrination are astounding. I have a photograph of one student of this program carrying a sign and protesting recently. The sign held by this student shouts in bold letters: “Dumb F*** Gringos. You Are Standing in Mexico Right Now!” Anyone who does not believe that racism, hatred, apartheid, and Marxism are being actively promulgated in these programs should think again. Every Arizonan should take the time to evaluate exactly what is being taught our children, with taxpayer money, in these Ethnic Studies programs and MEChA.

[About John Munger:] Mr. Munger is a Member of the National Board of Advisors, University of Arizona, Eller College of Business and Public Administration, and Chairman and Member of the Arizona Research Park Association. He has been in leadership in dozens of political campaigns at all levels. Mr. Munger has also served as a member or on the board of many other civic and political organizations. He is a partner in the law firm of Munger Chadwick, P.L.C. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Stanford University, his J.D. from the University of Arizona College of Law (with Distinction) and his Masters of Laws In International Trade and Business Law at the James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona. He is A-V rated by Martindale-Hubbe and also has been variously listed in Best of U.S. Lawyers, Southwest Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers of America and the Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers in the fields of Real Estate Law and Commercial Litigation. His areas of practice include Corporate Law, Commercial and Real Estate Transactions and Litigation, International Transactions, Intellectual Property Law, and Immigration. Mr. Munger is a co-founder and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Commerce Bank of Arizona.

Source: <http://thechollajumps.wordpress.com/2011/05/04/tusd-mexican-american-studies-curriculum-examined-by-john-munger/>

Recommended reading:
“Protecting the Prickly: La Raza Studies,”
by Ashley Thorne, 9/4/08
National Association of Scholars website:
http://www.nas.org/polArticles.cfm?doc_id=323.